

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SOVIET ROLE IN SOUTH YEMEN

REFERENCE: LONDON 20970 NOTAL

FOR KINSOLVING FROM INR

1. WE RECENTLY PREPARED A STUDY ON SOVIET ACTIVITIES

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IN SOUTH YEMEN. AS PART OF YOUR CONTINUING DIALOGUE
WITH THE BRITISH ON THE HORN IN GENERAL AND THE PDY IN
PARTICULAR, YOU MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO SHARE WITH THEM
THIS ASSESSMENT. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY COMMENTS THAT THE
BRITISH MAY HAVE ON THE TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS WE HAVE
REACHED ABOUT THE INCREASING SOVIET PRESENCE AND INFLUENCE
IN PDY.

2. TEXT OF INR ANALYSIS:

A. SOON AFTER SOUTH YEMEN BECAME INDEPENDENT IN 1967 THE SOVIET UNION BECAME ITS PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF WEAPONS

AND TRAINING. INITIALLY, THE SOVIET UNION TOOK CARE NOT TO JEOPARDIZE ITS OLDER RELATIONSHIP WITH NORTH YEMEN, WHICH VIEWED PDRY AS A MAJOR MILITARY THREAT. AS THE YAR BECAME POLITICALLY MORE CONSERVATIVE, HOWEVER, SOVIET RELATIONS WITH IT BECAME LESS OF A CONSTRAINT ON SOVIET-PDRY RELATIONS.

B. LAST SUMMER, THE USSR'S INTEREST IN SOUTH YEMEN BEGAN TO INCREASE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MOSCOW'S CHANGING ALLIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. AT THAT TIME, THE SOVIETS, IN RETURN FOR LIMITED USE OF ADEN'S PORT AND AIRPORT FACILITIES AND OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS, WERE PROVIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND MODEST ECONOMIC AID. THIS ASSISTANCE HAS INCLUDED ABOUT 300 MILITARY ADVISERS AND 500 OR SO CIVILIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TECHNICIANS. WE BELIEVE THE MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE ENGAGED PRINCIPALLY IN EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE, PROVIDING TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, AND TRAINING. THE CIVILIANS ARE ENGAGED IN MINERAL EXPLORATION AND PROVIDE SOME SUPERVISORY SERVICES IN THE FIELDS OF AGRICULTURE AND MEDICINE. THE SOVIETS MAY ALSO HAVE
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HELPED ARRANGE FOR CUBA TO SEND APPROXIMATELY THE SAME NUMBER OF PERSONNEL TO SOUTH YEMEN, OF WHOM ABOUT HALF ARE TRAINING THE PDRY MILITIA AND THE REST ARE CIVILIANS. THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC HAS PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO SOUTH YEMEN, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF INTERNAL SECURITY.

C. IN AUGUST, THE SOVIETS, EVIDENTLY ANTICIPATING FURTHER RESTRAINTS ON THEIR ACCESS TO PORTS AND AIRFIELDS IN SOMALIA AND VIEWING THE RELATIVE DECLINE IN SOVIET INTERESTS IN YAR, AGAIN APPROACHED PDRY ABOUT OBTAINING BROADER USE OF ADEN'S FACILITIES. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE PROPOSED BASE AGREEMENT DISCUSSED WITH PDRY, THE SOVIETS WOULD BE PERMITTED TO ESTABLISH OFFICES AND WORKSHOPS ASHORE AND TO SET UP FUEL AND WATER LINES WITHIN THE HARBOR. THE SOVIETS ALREADY HAVE ACCESS TO ANCHORAGE NEAR SOCOTRA ISLAND AND THE RIGHT TO MAKE PORT CALLS AT ADEN, BUT THIS ACCESS DOES NOT PROVIDE THE STORAGE AND AERIAL RESUPPLY OPTIONS THAT BERBERA OFFERED. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE SOVIETS ARE BUILDING FACILITIES ON SOCOTRA ISLAND. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE SOUTH YEMENIS HAVE YET ACCEPTED THE PROPOSED BASE

AGREEMENT.

D. FOLLOWING MOSCOW'S OUSTER FROM BERBERA LAST NOVEMBER, SOME SOVIET NAVAL SHIPS AND THE SOVIET FLOATING DRY DOCK AT BERBERA MOVED TO ADEN. BY MID-DECEMBER THE NUMBER OF NAVAL SHIPS IN THE SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN SQUADRON HAD INCREASED TO ABOUT 25 UNITS, APPARENTLY AS A RESULT OF THE OUSTER AS WELL AS OF INCREASED SOVIET SUPPORT TO ETHIOPIA. THE USUAL NUMBER OF SHIPS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN HAS BEEN ABOUT 18-20. MOST OF THE SHIPS ARE NOW LOCATED IN THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE RED SEA AND THE GULF OF ADEN. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF SOVIET PERSONNEL FORMERLY STATIONED IN SOMALIA HAVE BEEN RELOCATED TO ADEN.

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E. TO FACILITATE CURRENT NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, THE SOVIETS REQUIRE ACCESS TO A PORT AND LANDING RIGHTS FOR RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS, BOTH OF WHICH THEY COULD OBTAIN AT ADEN. THE PDRY LEADERSHIP, FOR ITS PART, REALIZES THAT THE SOVIETS COULD NOT EASILY FIND SATISFACTORY ALTERNATIVE PORT FACILITIES IN THE ENTIRE INDIAN OCEAN. IRAQ AND MOZAMBIQUE, WHERE THE SOVIETS DO HAVE LIMITED PORT FACILITIES, ARE TOO FAR AWAY FOR CONVENIENCE AND ETHIOPIA'S PORTS ARE OF TOO LIMITED ACCESS AND CAPACITY. MASSAWA, ONE OF THE TWO ETHIOPIAN PORTS, MOREOVER, IS UNDER ATTACK BY ERITREAN INSURGENTS. THUS, PDRY PROBABLY FEELS THAT IT CAN DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN IN FUTURE PDRY-SOVIET RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE LIMITS ON MOSCOW'S WILLINGNESS TO UNDERWRITE ADEN'S MILITARY AND POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA.

F. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE THAT SOVIET USE OF PDRY NAVAL AND AIR FACILITIES WILL BE EXPANDED AND POSSIBLY WILL INCLUDE A COMMUNICATIONS SITE. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE A SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP IN PDRY AS GREAT AS THAT WHICH OCCURRED OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS IN SOMALIA. IN RETURN FOR EXPANDED PRIVILEGES, THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY GIVE PDRY MORE ARMS AND POSSIBLY INCREASED THOUGH STILL MODEST, ECONOMIC AID. THE SOVIETS HAVE ARRANGED TO SEND SOME PDRY MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ETHIOPIA AND ARE REPLACING THIS EQUIPMENT WITH NEW DELIVERIES.

G. IN ADDITION TO INTEREST IN PDRY NAVAL AND AIR FACILITIES FOR ITS OWN NEEDS, THE SOVIET UNION HAS ALSO COME TO DEPEND ON ADEN AS A MAJOR STAGING AREA FOR ITS AIR AND NAVAL SUPPLY LINK WITH ETHIOPIA. SINCE
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THE END OF NOVEMBER, THE SOVIETS HAVE SENT SOME 40 FLIGHTS THROUGH ADEN TO ETHIOPIA. VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE SOVIET FLIGHTS TO ETHIOPIA HAVE BEEN VIA ADEN. MOST OF THE SOVIET FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN MILITARY TRANSPORTS CARRYING WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE AIRCRAFT, AMMUNITION, SPARE PARTS, AND VARIOUS OTHER ITEMS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. IN ADDITION, NEARLY A DOZEN OF THE FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN PASSENGER AIRCRAFT, PROBABLY CARRYING SOVIET AND CUBAN ADVISORY PERSONNEL TO ETHIOPIA.

H. THE USE OF ADEN AS A STAGING AREA FOR THE SOVIET SUPPLY OF ETHIOPIA BENEFITS BOTH GOVERNMENTS. FOR THE SOVIETS, ADEN IS A SECURE AND WELL EQUIPPED FACILITY WHOSE USE ENABLES THEM TO DELIVER SUPPLIES NEAR THE FINAL DESTINATION AND TO CONSERVE ON SCARCE FUEL SUPPLIES IN ADDIS ABABA. IT ALSO OFFERS LIMITED FACILITIES FOR SHIP REPAIR. FROM THE PDRY'S VIEWPOINT, COOPERATING IN THE SOVIET AIRLIFT PROVIDES A DEMONSTRATION OF ITS ABILITY TO SUPPORT PROGRESSIVE REGIMES AND IMPROVES ITS CASE FOR GREATER SOVIET AID, WHILE STILL NOT ALLOWING THE SOVIETS TOO GREAT A PRESENCE ON PDRY SOIL. CHRISTOPHER

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